

Raleigh, NC – Representative David Price (D-NC) joined officials from Environment North Carolina today to give remarks at a press conference announcing the results of the organization's new report. The report, "Getting on Track with Modern Public Transportation: Record Transit Ridership Increases Energy Independence," shows public transit ridership was up 16 percent in 2008 in North Carolina, outpacing all but one other state—thanks in part to a 20 percent surge in ridership in the Triangle.

The report shows North Carolinians also drove less in 2008, with 2,780,000 fewer miles driven than in the year before. This decrease saved more than 20 million gallons of gasoline, which is the equivalent of removing 35,000 cars from the roads. Many of these car trips were replaced by public transit.

"As this report illustrates, demand for public transportation alternatives in high-growth areas such as the Triangle is far outpacing supply," Representative David Price said. "Given the potential that transit projects have to help us address transportation needs and broader challenges such as climate change and energy independence, federal investments in public transit are no longer just a matter of dollars and cents—they are a matter of our core national interest."

The report did not calculate other benefits of increased transit ridership such as reduced congestion, fewer hours stuck in traffic, reductions in smog and soot pollution, or money saved by households that use transit regularly.

"Every dollar we spend on public transit makes us less dependent on foreign oil and reduces global warming pollution and smog," Environment North Carolina's Margaret Hartzell said.

Rep. Price has long been a supporter of local transportation projects as a part of efforts to decrease our dependence on foreign oil and reduce pollution and harmful emissions that contribute to global warming. Earlier this year, Rep. Price voted in favor of H.R. 2454, the American Clean Energy and Security Act, which includes several provisions designed to encourage the use of public transit alternatives.

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